

Building a Strong Foundation for School Success: Parent Guides Tip Sheet for Professionals Working with Parents

Building A Strong Foundation for School Success: Kentucky's Early Childhood Standards is a document developed for early childhood professionals that reflects the range of developmental abilities typical of young children at different ages and represents the expectations for the skills and levels of knowledge that children are able to achieve. The content is intended to support parents and early care and education professionals in planning experiences to promote healthy growth and development.

The Parent Guides for Kentucky's Early Childhood Standards provide a vehicle to assist parents in understanding the developmental sequence that unfolds in the first four years of life. These guides stress the significance of everyday positive interactions and how these interactions help to prepare children for later success in school and life. The guides lay the foundation for parents to see the connection between what they do with their child during daily routines and how these everyday activities link to their child's learning.

When using the parent guides with families it is important to:

- Consider the make-up of the child's immediate family – know who is included in the role of parent.
- Respect the cultural background of the family.
- Be sensitive to the education and literacy level of the parents.
- Remember that only age ranges are specified in the guide, so this tool is adaptable to use with all children and takes into account variations in child development.
- Focus on areas of strengths and weaknesses to help parents see where their child is developmentally and better understand developmental milestones.

As a professional working with parents, this guide can help you assist parents to:

- See the connection between skills gained by young children and the skills needed for later school success.
- Better understand what is developmentally appropriate for their child.
- Build routines that help support and further their child's development.
- Set and achieve goals for their child.
- Plan activities that are based on everyday routines.
- See strengths and areas of weakness in their child's development.
- Give the parents a common language when talking with their child's teachers

Ideas/Activities for using the Parent Guide:

1. Consider using the parent guides over multiple times, focusing only on one area at each meeting, activity, or event. For example, have a parent meeting centered around communication and expand on ways to support young children's communication skills.
2. For children with an IEP/IFSP, work with parents to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses and assist parents in using the guide to identify developmental areas on which to focus. Then work with the parents to plan developmentally appropriate activities.
3. Talk with parents about areas of strengths and weakness targeted by their child's teacher. Focus on particular developmental areas and plan fun activities to build on the child's skills.
4. Point out concrete examples of everyday routines and everyday objects to help parent's plan activities for their child.
5. Explain the connection between developmental domains in the Parent Guide for Children Birth to Three and the content areas in the Parent Guide for Children Three and Four and how these link to the Kentucky Program of Studies. This will help parents understand the connection between early learning and later school success.

The Parent Guides can be accessed at www.kidsnow.ky.gov